

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED COYOTE HUNT FROM HORSEBACK

(SRP# NV-03414-0-22)

T.21N., R.19E. Sec. 1,12,13

T.22N., R.19E. Sec. 36

T.21N., R.20E. Sec. 5,6,7,8,17,18

T.22N., R.20E. Sec. W₂3,4,5,6,7,8,9,W₂10,W₂15,
16,17,18,19,20,21,22,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34

Washoe County, Nevada

Lahontan Resource Area
Carson City District
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

August 1990

EA #NV-030-90-065

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED COYOTE HUNT FROM HORSEBACK (SRP# NV-03414-0-22)

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION:

The Red Rock Hounds, Inc., have submitted a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) application, in conformance with 43 CFR 8372.2, to chase coyotes from horseback. This Environmental Assessment is intended to appraise the potential consequences of permitting this action. Issuance of an SRP for this type of activity is in conformance with the Lahontan Resource Management Plan (RMP) of 1985.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action. The Red Rock Hounds, Inc., proposes to conduct English-style "fox hunts" in the Hungry Valley area north of Reno, Nevada, in the Carson City District (see Maps 1 and 2). During these events, approximately 10 to 15 riders on horseback pursue a coyote, which a pack of about 20 foxhounds has flushed, on a cross-country chase. Each pursuit lasts until the coyote either eludes the hounds, enters terrain where the horses cannot follow or becomes tired, at which time the hounds are recalled. The coyote is not caught, injured or run to the point of exhaustion. No firearms are used during the course of the hunt. The applicant anticipates that the area would be used 7-8 times during the time period between October 1, 1990 and April 1, 1991.

Alternatives. The only other alternative to the proposed action is denial of the permit application.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

Impacts of the Proposed Action. Vegetation in the Hungry Valley area is semi-arid, sagebrush-bunchgrass type, with some juniper scattered throughout the low hills surrounding the valley itself. The area generally may be characterized as rolling terrain typical of the Great Basin. No surface disturbance is involved in this activity other than some minor displacement of vegetation and soils in the one-half acre staging area where vehicles and horse trailers are parked.

No threatened or endangered plant or animal species are known to exist within the area. A small population of mule deer (approximately 20) reside in the area, however the main body of the Lassen-Washoe Interstate Deer Herd winters in the area approximately 6-8 miles to the north and west of the area where this activity would take place. There are also a few pronghorn antelope present in the area. While it is

possible that a few deer or antelope may be startled by the events and move to adjacent areas, no threat to populations or permanent displacement is anticipated.

Pursuit of a coyote lasts until the coyote either eludes the hounds, enters terrain where the horses cannot follow or becomes tired, at which time the hounds are recalled. The coyote is not caught, injured or run to the point of exhaustion. Although some individual animals may experience a certain amount of stress during the chase, it is not anticipated that this activity will put excessive stress on coyote populations.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife does not anticipate any adverse impacts to wildlife as a result of this activity.

The District Archaeologist has indicated that a cultural clearance for this activity within the proposed use area is not required.

There will be no impacts on visual resources and a bond will be obtained to assure compliance with permit stipulations and repair of any accidental damage to improvements on public lands.

There will be some noise-related impacts associated with the baying of the hounds as they pursue the coyote and the sound of the horn used by the Master of the Hunt to recall the hounds, however, these will be minimal. The area proposed for the parking/staging area is over one mile away from the nearest residence and the most likely course for the hunt to take would be further away from areas of human habitation.

Impacts of Alternatives. If the SRP application is denied the applicant will not be able to use public lands for this activity. None of the impacts described in the previous section will occur.

Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts. In addition to the standard stipulations included on the back of the SRP application form, the following conditions should be included as part of any approved SRP:

- (1) Establishment of permanent markers and improvements is prohibited;
- (2) Vehicle parking will be confined to identified parking/staging areas;
- (3) The BLM reserves the right to close the area to recreational use at any time, particularly during periods of extreme fire danger;
- (4) Overnight camping and open fires are prohibited. All litter must be removed immediately following each event;
- (5) The permittee will be aware of, and abide by, any pertinent State and local laws and regulations;

- (6) The permittee will be responsible for repair and/or restoration of any improvements placed on public lands, by BLM or its authorized users, that may be damaged as a result of his/her activities;
- (7) Within 30 days after the expiration of the permit, the permittee will complete the post-use report, calculate the actual use fee and return this report and the appropriate use fees to the BLM, Carson City District;
- (8) This permit does not authorize the crossing or use of private lands or lands under the control of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony;
- (9) Particular care must be taken to avoid any harassment of wild horses or wildlife, especially mule deer and antelope, during the permittee's use of the area. Any incident of harassment may result in revocation of the permit by the Authorized Officer.

If all standard and special stipulations are followed there should be no residual impacts to the environment as a result of this activity.

PERSONS OR AGENCIES CONSULTED.

Because of the nature of the proposed action and previous conflicts which arose as a result of this activity being permitted in the Bedell Flat area to the northwest of proposed use area, it was decided that a scoping letter would be sent to interested parties, including the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the affected grazing permittee, asking for their comments (Attachments 1 and 2).

One comment was received and is included as Attachment 3. This letter, from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, recommended approval of the application.

Written by:

Terry F. Knight
Terry F. Knight
Outdoor Recreation Planner
Lahontan Resource Area

21 August 1990
Date

Reviewed by:

William R. Brigham
William R. Brigham
Wildlife Management Biologist
Lahontan Resource Area

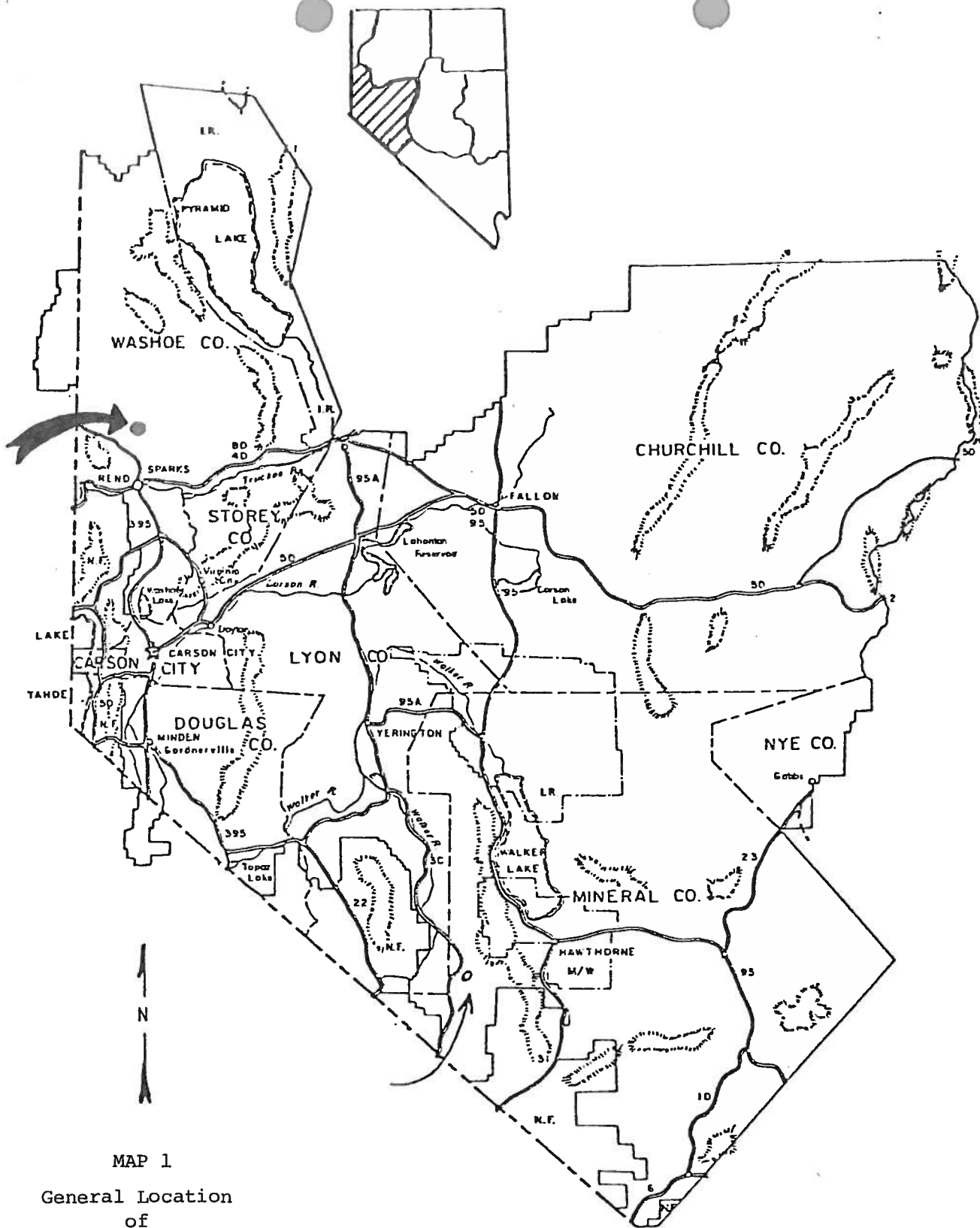
21 Aug 90
Date

R.H. Wolfe
R.H. Wolfe
Supervisory Range Conservationist
Lahontan Resource Area

8/21/90
Date

David E. Loomis
David E. Loomis
Environmental Coordinator
Carson City District

8/23/90
Date



MAP 1
General Location
of
Proposed Use Area

CARSON CITY DISTRICT

